

**[Insert name of local agency/group issuing news release]**

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## **Wilson County Community Early Childhood Council awarded \$15,000**

*Wilson County CECC awarded grant from Governor's Office of Early Childhood*

**Wilsonville, Ky. (October 24, 2012)** – Governor Steve Beshear today announced nearly \$1.2 million in funding for 69 Community Early Childhood Councils (CECC) across Kentucky to promote school readiness for children.

The announcement is part of the governor's continuing commitment to improving education and health services for Kentucky's youngest citizens.

"Too many children enter school with preventable health problems, underdeveloped minds and no sense of curiosity or engagement in life around them. They start out already behind," said Gov. Beshear. "These grants will help communities put our youngest students on the path to a life of promise and meaning."

Wilson County CECCs was awarded a grant to improve school readiness for children in the community and increase family engagement in early care and education programs.

The purpose of the CECCs is to bring a broad-based group of local people together to assess the unique needs of each early childhood community and build upon current strengths as communities explore creative ways to meet those needs. Councils were challenged to create distinctive ways of improving the early childhood community.

Approved by the Early Childhood Advisory Council and administered through the Governor's Office of Early Childhood, the individual grants range from \$8,000 to \$68,900, for a total of \$1.2 million in awards statewide. Funds will focus on improving early care and education through education settings through professional development and promoting and supporting participation in the STARS for KIDS NOW quality rating system.

The 69 councils across the state that received the funding include community representatives from local school districts, public health departments, childcare providers, Head Start and local libraries.

Money will also be used for outreach to families to introduce them to Kentucky's kindergarten readiness definition and how they may help prepare their children for school. Activities may include literacy fairs, community screener days and camp kindergarten.

Terry Tolan, executive director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood, said the councils rally communities to support young children and their families.

"Local Community Early Childhood Councils are an integral part of our work to improve kindergarten readiness in Kentucky," Tolan said. "Councils review local needs and mobilize their communities to focus on giving children the best possible start in school and in life."

The Office of Early Childhood works with the local councils to provide support and outreach. The Early Childhood Advisory Council was created last year by Gov. Beshear to unite stakeholders behind common strategies, standards and goals for Kentucky's early childhood system.

A part of that initiative is the CECC, which address the unique needs and strengths of local communities related to early childhood. The councils are a vehicle for bringing together community members to support issues of importance to children and families.

"We are committed to improving the lives of every child in Wilson County and I appreciate the work of Governor Beshear to give every child the best opportunity to succeed in school and in life." Jane Doe, Chair of the Wilson County CECC.